

Town of North Smithfield
Historic District Commission

Minutes of January 25, 2016

A meeting of the North Smithfield Historic District Commission was held on
Monday, January 25, 2016
at 6:30 PM
Heritage Hall, 101 Greene St. Street, Slatersville, RI

Call to order: 6:40

Members Present Dan Couture, Christian de Rezendes Jeffrey Harris, Jeffrey Fontaine,
Elizabeth Martin, Keith Nadeau, Eric Piette

Members Absent: none

Materials Distributed: Agenda, Minutes from November 30, 2015, C of A for Forestdale
School house

Approval of Minutes from November 30, 2015

Minutes from November 30, 2015 meeting was unanimously approved.

Applications

- A. Certificate of Appropriateness: 109 School Street (Forestdale Schoolhouse), Plat 5, Lot 39,
Forestdale Schoolhouse Historic District.
Owner: Town of North Smithfield, leased by the North Smithfield Heritage Association

John J. Faricy, President of North Smithfield Heritage Association(NSHA) was in
attendance as the authorized representative.

Proposal includes the removal of existing exterior stairs (two sets on the southeast and
southwest sides of south elevation facing School Street.)
Replacing the existing stairs with new construction of stairs as shown on remitted
architectural drawings.

Discussion:

The schoolhouse and property located at 190 School Street has been deemed
'contributing' to the architectural and historic significance of the Forestdale
Schoolhouse Historic District and are part of the larger National Historic District of
Forestdale, RI.

The applicant is seeking replacement in kind as opposed to repair since
the stairs (risers, treads, posts, rails, trim, etc.) show evidence of varying degrees of rot and
decay and were deemed to have surpassed their useful life. While the underlying structure,
the stringers and possibly some of the posts were in relatively decent, salvageable
condition, repairs would have meant replacement of almost all of the remaining
components, and this would still have not met current building code issues. (The stairs
in question were not the original ones constructed for the schoolhouse but themselves were
replacements built in the 1970's.)

The overall height and length of the new top landing, the revised size of each riser in accordance, the increase in the number of treads, as well as the top and bottom rail and balusters for the proposed entry stairs are designed in response to be conforming to current Rhode Island building codes. For example, public facilities cannot have a step directly from the door to the landing which thus required an additional riser and extending the landing from two feet to five feet. The handrail must be graspable according to code and is another example of a change due to conformance to the code.

The proposed stairs have been designed in attempt to recreate and preserve the overall historical character of the existing stair design in as much as possible while trying to adhere as much as possible to the state and local building codes.

The finishes will look the same. The materials used for the replacement will be in kind, wood for wood, albeit the wood used for the replacement will be a wood species that better suits the New England environment.

To be consistent and objective, the work as proposed should be reviewed and judged at a minimum in accordance with NSHDC Standards 2, 3, 5 and 6 as follows: (2) Retain Historic Character, (3) Avoid Conjecture (Retain the Sequence of Historical Events), (5) Protect Distinctive Construction and Craftsmanship, and (6) Repair Rather Than Replace.

It was determined that while the applicant is not meeting Standard 2 in the removal of the two staircases, it is meeting Standard 5, and portions of the work meet Standards 3 and 6 while satisfying the mandates imposed by the building code as well. Based upon the above findings of fact, the Commission determined that the Alteration/ Addition/Remodeling/ Repairs are appropriate and congruous. Approval for the application as submitted, and a Certificate of Appropriateness was granted.

Jeff Harris recused himself from the vote as he serves on the board of the applicant, the NSHA, and assisted in the design.

Motion to Approve:	Elizabeth Martin
Seconded:	Dan Couture
Voted Yes:	Dan Couture, Christian de Rezendes, Jeffrey Fontaine, Elizabeth Martin, Keith Nadeau, Eric Piette
Opposed:	None

Old Business

A. Review/Update: Forestdale Schoolhouse Master Plan(re: joint venture with the N.S. Heritage Association).

- 1) NSHA has applied for a matching grant of \$6,500 from RIHPC and is awaiting word.
- 2) In the meantime, a prebid meeting for a master plan was held. A few firms were in attendance.
- 3) Bids due March 3, 2016.

B. Workshop/ Review/Update: NSHDC Standards & Guidelines Brochure (RIHPC CLG Grant status).

1. In addition to the completed brochures having been mailed to homeowners within the local historic districts, digital links to the brochure and national guidelines have been

added to the town website, and a hard copy of the national guidelines has been provided at the Building Inspector's office.

New Business

- A. Slatersville Stone Arch Bridge Rehabilitation: Implications of RIDOT recommended revisions to the proposed design.
1. DEM has imposed a requirement that corrugated steel is to be used to line the bottom of the arch bridge in lieu of what was originally proposed.

B. Nominations and Elections of Officers (Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary)

Motion to approve the existing officer slate as follows:

Chairperson: Jeffrey Harris,

Vice- Chairperson: Jeffrey Fontaine

Secretary: Elizabeth Martin

Motion to approve: Dan Couture

Seconded: Eric Piette

All in favor.

Opposed: None

C. Current events related to NSHA

1. Eagle Scout has constructed a picket fence at the schoolhouse.
2. The NSHA is creating a program titled "Pickets of Memories" where they hope to apply plaques to the pickets with the names of alumni and sponsors.

D. 2016 meeting dates for the NSHDC as follows (all Mondays):

Jan 25, Feb. 22, March 21, April 25, May 23, June 20, July 25, August 22, Sept 26, Oct 24, Nov 28, Dec 26

Subcommittee Reports:

- A. Subcommittee: Union Village Historic District Research Committee
Research

1. Continuing. 61% complete.

- B. Subcommittee Report: Rhode Island Historic Preservation and Heritage Commission for Certified Local Government Grant(NSHDC CLG Grant Committee).

1. Continuing.

- C. Subcommittee Report : North Smithfield Historic District Commission
Standards and Guidelines (NSHDC S&G Committee):

1. Completed Brochure. See above, under Old Business Caption B.
2. Jeff Harris hopes to begin a review of the 4 major parts of the current rules and regulations.

Meeting Adjourned

The meeting was called to a close at 8:30

Motion: Dan Couture

Seconded: Elizabeth Martin

All in favor

Opposed: None